

## **Welcome to Faith House Project**

This is a journey of faith. We are leaving familiar territory.

Most of us encounter God and join our religious families with great expectations. At the beginning, we dream and are ready to risk, change, even sacrifice for the good of the world. We have visions of justice, courage, and peace for all humanity.

But soon, too many of us find ourselves enclosed within our newfound religious worlds. From the initial expansive vision of a God who rules and sustains all of reality, we shrink into the survival interests of our chosen religions, theologies, denominations, churches, mosques, or synagogues. The blessings our religions offer give way to the fears our religions harbor.

We turn our hearts inwards and over time we find ourselves isolated from the world that needs us, and thus isolated from the God who is in the world. We have developed many maps to guide us on our journey to God and too often we find ourselves lost in maps. As a result of this separation from reality, no matter how difficult it is to admit it, our religions (including atheism) inflict wounds on the world. The world is convulsing in religious strife and the solutions must come from all people of faith.

The Faith House project is a journey from maps back to the landscape of life. That's where our religions are supposed to function; in the world, in the presence of "the other," whoever that may be.

This is a journey we can only take with one another. If we follow this path together, we will need to trust not only in God, but also on God's people, whoever they are and wherever we find them, inside or outside the boundaries of our religions. We will need to re-learn what it means to trust in God and humanity. God has given us humans the ability to envision a better world and re-imagine our religions.

This is a journey that nothing can stop. Slowly, step by step, conversation by conversation, prayer by prayer, song by song, laughter by laughter, one meal for the hungry at a time, one advocacy letter at time, new ways of understanding God will emerge. They always have, they always will.

You made it to this website because someone's words kindled hope inside of you. You are welcome here. As the poet Rumi wrote about interfaith community of his time: "Come, come. We are not a caravan of despair!" We trust that learning about this Faith House project will inspire you and give you a fresh, thoughtful, and effective venue to change the world we live in.

On this website you can:

1. Learn about the Faith House project,
2. Participate in the conversation about establishing this House, and
3. Discover relevant resources and links about the project.

As you read on let me offer a warning. This is not a journey for the faint-hearted. Everything truly good begins with some sort of transgression. So we plan to do just that—transgress the rules that isolate us from one another and from God, so we can dream again, spring into action, even sacrifice ourselves for the good of the world.

There is no end to what God can do through people who are willing to learn together how to love the world well in God's name. So as you read, talk, network, and contribute, may our prayers for each other sustain us.

Courage, humility, beauty,

Samir Selmanovic